REMARKS

I.   Response to Rejections Under 35 USC Section 112

At page 2 of the Office Action, claims 3, 5, and 7 are rejected under 35 USC Section 112 as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which the Applicant regards as the invention.

Claim 3 has been canceled, thus making the rejection moot. Claim 5 has been amended to refer to "said <u>outgoing</u> message". Claim 7 has been amended to refer to "said expiration date".

Thus, the Applicant believes that the rejection has been overcome.

II.   Response to Rejections Under 35 USC Section 102

Also at page 2 of the Office Action, claims 1-2 and 5-6 are rejected under 35 USC section 102 as being anticipated by "Wu" (US Patent 5,933,477).

The Applicant has incorporated the limitation of claim 3 into claim 1. As noted by the Examiner, at page 4, item 6 of the Office Action, Wu fails to show the searching of the attachment.

Accordingly, the Applicant believes that this rejection has been overcome.

III.   Response to Rejections Under 35 USC Section 103

At pages 4-5 of the Office Action, claims 3-4 are rejected as being unpatentable over Wu in view of "Leonard" (US Patent 6,721,784). The Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection since neither of the references, when taken either singly or in combination therewith, teaches all of the elements of amended independent claim 1. Specifically, neither of the references disclose, suggest, or otherwise make obvious a method for the computer-assisted deletion of messages that includes "searching user entered content and an attachment to an outgoing electronic message for date information", as recited in amended independent claim 1.

Wu discloses a changing-urgency-dependent message or call delivery system. In Wu, communications (e.g., messages or calls) are treated with increasing urgency as their "expiration" time approaches. As noted by the Examiner, at page 4, item 6 of the Office Action, Wu fails to show the searching of the attachment.

Leonard discloses an electronic mail system and method that enables the originator of a message sent by electronic mail to select a date, time, or event at which the message and all incarnations of the message to self-destruct, regardless of the number and types of computers or software systems that may have interacted with the message. However, contrary to the Examiner's assertion at page 4 of the Office Action, Leonard does not disclose, or suggest, or otherwise make obvious, a system or method in which the *attachment* is searched in addition to the electronic message. In Leonard, the "attachment" operates in conjunction with an applet program in which the sender must open the attachment and follow the directions provided by the applet installation program so that the associated message content can be deleted at an appropriate time. Thus, there is no need for the step of "searching user entered content and an attachment to an outgoing electronic message for date information" (as recited in amended independent claim 1) since the applet of Leonard already "prompts the user for an expiration date", as recited at column 12, lines 40-41. In other words, the system of Leonard does not need to *search* an attachment, since the expiration date is explicitly entered by the user.

When taken together the combination of the references does not suggest the invention claim 1. Since Wu fails to show the searching of the attachment, and Leonard teaches the explicit entry of a date, time, or event at which the message self-destructs, there is no need for a step of "searching user entered content and an attachment to an outgoing electronic message for date information", as recited in amended independent claim 1.

At pages 5-7 of the Office Action, claims 7-11, 13-14, and 16-19 are rejected as being unpatentable over Wu in view of "MacPhail" (US Patent 5,107,419). The Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection since neither of the references, when taken either singly or in combination therewith, teaches all of the

elements of amended independent claim 1. Specifically, neither of the references disclose, suggest, or otherwise make obvious a method for the computer-assisted deletion of messages that includes "searching user entered content and an attachment to an outgoing electronic message for date information", as recited in amended independent claim 1. Nor do the references disclose, suggest, or otherwise make obvious a system for the computer-assisted deletion of date-sensitive messages that includes "an auto-searching module that searches within said electronic message and an attachment to said electronic message for date information", as recited in amended independent claims 14 and 17 (claim language may vary slightly).

As mentioned previously, Wu discloses a changing-urgency-dependent message or call delivery system. In Wu, communications (e.g., messages or calls) are treated with increasing urgency as their "expiration" time approaches. As noted by the Examiner, at page 4, item 6 of the Office Action, Wu fails to show the searching of the attachment.

In MacPhail, a method of assigning retention and deletion criteria to electronic documents stored in an interactive information handling system is disclosed. In MacPhail, a series of prompts is presented by way of a menu on the screen of a display device allowing the user to interactively enter the retention and deletion selection criteria. Because *the user explicitly enters the retention and deletion criteria*, there is no need for the step of "searching user entered content and an attachment to an outgoing electronic message for date information", as MacPhail already "prompts the user for an expiration date", as recited at column 12, lines 40-41. The system of MacPhail does not need to search an attachment, since the expiration date is explicitly entered by the user.

Given this interactive menu system of MacPhail, the Applicant asserts that MacPhail does not disclose, suggest, or otherwise make obvious a method for the computer-assisted deletion of messages that includes "searching user entered content and an attachment to an outgoing electronic message for date information", as recited in amended independent claim 1. Nor does MacPhail disclose, suggest, or otherwise make obvious a system for the computer-assisted deletion of date-sensitive messages that includes "an auto-searching module that searches within said electronic message and an attachment to said electronic

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message for date information", as recited in amended independent claims 14 and 17 (claim language may vary slightly).

When taken together, the combination of Wu in view of "MacPhail" does not disclose, suggest, or otherwise make obvious the invention of the Applicant's claims. As Wu is silent on the aspect of searching of the attachment for date information, and MacPhail teaches a system wherein a user interactively enters the retention and deletion selection criteria, there is no need for a step of "searching user entered content and an attachment to an outgoing electronic message for date information", as recited in amended independent claim 1. Nor is there a need for "an auto-searching module that searches within said electronic message and an attachment to said electronic message for date information", as recited in amended independent claims 14 and 17 (claim language may vary slightly).

At pages 7-8 of the Office Action, claims 12, 15, and 20 are rejected as being unpatentable over Wu and MacPhail, and further in view of Leonard. The Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection since neither of the references, when taken either singly or in combination therewith, teaches all of the elements of amended independent claims 1, 14, or 17. Specifically, neither of the references disclose, suggest, or otherwise make obvious a method for the computer-assisted deletion of messages that includes "searching user entered content and an attachment to an outgoing electronic message for date information", as recited in amended independent claim 1. Nor to the references disclose, suggest, or otherwise make obvious a system for the computer-assisted deletion of date-sensitive messages that includes "an auto-searching module that searches within said electronic message and an attachment to said electronic message for date information", as recited in amended independent claims 14 and 17 (claim language may vary slightly).

As mentioned previously, Wu discloses a changing-urgency-dependent message or call delivery system. In Wu, communications (e.g., messages or calls) are treated with increasing urgency as their "expiration" time approaches. As noted by the Examiner, at page 4, item 6 of the Office Action, Wu fails to show the searching of the attachment.

Also as mentioned previously, MacPhail discloses a method of assigning retention and deletion criteria to electronic documents stored in an interactive information handling system. In MacPhail, a series of prompts is presented by way of a menu on the screen of a display device allowing the user to interactively enter the retention and deletion selection criteria. Because the user explicitly enters the retention and deletion criteria, there is no need for the step of "searching user entered content and an attachment to an outgoing electronic message for date information", as MacPhail already "prompts the user for an expiration date", as recited at column 12, lines 40-41. The system of MacPhail does not need to search an attachment, since the expiration date is explicitly entered by the user.

Also as mentioned previously, Leonard discloses an electronic mail system and method that enables the originator of a message sent by electronic mail to select a date, time, or event at which the message and all incarnations of the message to self-destruct, regardless of the number and types of computers or software systems that may have interacted with the message. However, contrary to the Examiner's assertion at page 4 of the Office Action, Leonard does not disclose, or suggest, or otherwise make obvious, a system or method in which the *attachment* is searched in addition to the electronic message. In Leonard, the "attachment" operates in conjunction with an applet program in which the sender must open the attachment and follow the directions provided by the applet installation program so that the associated message content can be deleted at an appropriate time. Thus, there is no need for the step of "searching user entered content and an attachment to an outgoing electronic message for date information" (as recited in amended independent claim 1) since the applet of Leonard already "prompts the user for an expiration date", as recited at column 12, lines 40-41. In other words, the system of Leonard does not need to search an attachment, since the expiration date is explicitly entered by the user.

When Wu, MacPhail, and Leonard are taken together, the combination does not disclose, suggest, or otherwise make obvious the invention of the Applicant's claims. As Wu is silent on the aspect of searching of the attachment for date information, and MacPhail a system in which user interactively enters the retention and deletion selection criteria, and Leonard teaches the explicit entry of
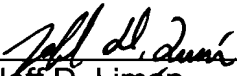
a date, time, or event at which the message self-destructs, there is no need for a step of "searching user entered content and an attachment to an outgoing electronic message for date information", as recited in amended independent claim 1. Nor is there a need for "an auto-searching module that searches within said electronic message and an attachment to said electronic message for date information", as recited in amended independent claims 14 and 17 (claim language may vary slightly).

Accordingly, the Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw all rejections to the claims and pass this application onto allowance. However, if there are continuing rejections, please contact the Applicant's Agent so that the issue can be resolved promptly.

IV.   Additional Fees

It is not believed that additional fees are due at this time; however, if any additional fee is required in connection with the filing of this Amendment, please charge the fee to Deposit Account No. 08-2025.

Respectfully Submitted,
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